



# The Everlasting Home of the Damned

Dr. W. Herschel Ford, 1969

## Luke 16:19-31

We have come to a time when few people believe in a literal hell. Yet it is still in the Bible, and it is still true because the word of God is true. Men change their ideas but God's truth is always the same. The great eternal God tells us that there is an eternal hell for all those who reject Christ and live without God. Preaching on hell has diminished. We hear many light, fluffy sermons about peace, goodness, brotherhood, and the social gospel, but some congregations never hear hell even mentioned.

When Dr. Ramsay Pollard was pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church in Knoxville, one of his young people brought a boy from an Episcopal home to church one night. When the boy reached home after the service, his father asked him how he liked the sermon. "I liked it pretty good," said the boy, "but the preacher used a bad word right there in the pulpit. He used the word 'hell' over and over again." That boy had never heard the word used except in a bad sense. Yes, preaching about hell has cooled off, but hell is as hot as ever. The Bible that tells us of a wonderful heaven also tells us of an awful hell. God created hell just as sure as he created heaven. One is just as real, just as necessary, just as lasting as the other.

## Reasons for preaching on hell

1. *We must preach on hell because it's in the Bible.* Do you want your preacher to preach his own ideas or the Word of God. You will reply, "Let him preach God's Word." Therefore he must preach the whole counsel of God. He must preach about heaven and delight in it. He must preach about hell even though he dislikes to do so. The preacher has not been called to tell what he believes, or what his church thinks, or what someone writes in a magazine. He must preach what God says. We know what God says is true. We know that there is a hell. We know that we must warn men to

escape the "wrath to come".

So, let today's preacher preach on hell. But let him preach it in love. A great teacher once said, "Young men, you should preach on hell but let it be with a broken heart and tears in your eyes." We must tell men about the everlasting home of the doomed, but we must [sorrow?] over those who are condemned. And we must tell them of a loving Saviour whose death makes it possible for them to avoid hell.

2. *We must preach on hell to awaken Christians.* People all around us are going to hell. They are getting closer to the flames everyday. But we are asleep; we don't realize what peril they are in. It may be someone very near and dear to you. If I can get you to see their lost condition and how hell is waiting for them, maybe you'll start praying and working for their salvation.

General Booth of the Salvation Army was speaking to a graduating class in the Army's training school. These young people had been there several years, learning how to work for God and win souls. The general said, "Young men, if I could have had my way, I would never have had you here for these years of training. But I would have put you in hell for 24 hours. I would have allowed you to feel the pains and pangs of the damned, to hear the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. I would have caused you to see how they suffer forever. Then I would have sent you out into the world to warn men to flee from the wrath to come." General Booth was right. If we really knew what hell was like, nothing could stop us from urging men to come to Christ. So we must preach on hell, hoping that people will get concerned for their friends and loved ones who are going there.

3. *We must preach on hell to warn sinners.* It's an awful thing to remember that you could be in hell in another minute. No doctor can guarantee you of even one minute of life. David said, "there is but a step between me and death." (I Sam. 20:3) I have looked out into my congregation and seen someone in good health, well and strong, and before another Sunday they had gone to be with the Lord. It could happen to you; it could happen to me. What if you are not ready? What if Christ is not your Saviour? This means that you would be doomed forever.

Some people had no use for the Gospel. They hated preachers and laughed at Bible truth. Now they are in hell. Let's talk to one of them for a minute.

"Did you intend to come to hell?"

"No," he answers, "I meant all along to become a Christian and get ready for death. But I waited too long. Death slipped up on me and the next thing I knew I was in hell."

"Were you a wicked man? Were you a drunkard, or a thief, or a murderer or adulterer?"

"Oh no," he answers, "I lived a pretty good life, but I left out the main thing. I left Christ out of my life."

So today we have to preach on hell to warn men. Look all around you, lost sinner. People are dying every day. Your hour is coming. I want you to realize the seriousness of it and come to Christ. This is the only way you can escape hell.

## The certainty of hell

Today many learned men deny the existence of hell. We have come to a time when we talk glibly about the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. We imply that everybody loves everybody else and that all men are saved. We think of God as a great big benevolent Santa Claus, smiling down upon all. But God is not the father of all. He is the Creator of all, but not the Father of all. He becomes our father only when we come to Christ. Jesus said in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil...." He was thinking of lost people. John 1:12 tells us that "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God....." These are the ones who can claim God as Father. They are saved, and they'll never go to hell. But remember this, you are not a child of God until you come unto Him through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

A preacher preached a sermon on hell and a woman asked him if he had any children. He replied that he did. "Do you love them?" she asked. "Oh yes," the preacher answered. "Well," the woman said, "what would you think of a father who could save his children from suffering and refused to do it?" "I would say that he was a tyrant and a monster," the preacher said. "That's what you're making God out to be. God would be a monster if He sent his children to hell instead of delivering them by his power." "But lady," the preacher responded, "you're making one mistake. God doesn't have any children in hell and he never will have. The people in hell are the devil's children. All of God's children are in heaven or on the way there. God has a home for His children and the devil has a home for his."

He was right. God is the Father only of those who believe in Jesus Christ....who have been born again. Too many people are presuming on the goodness of God as an excuse for sin. They say, "Let us live as we please. God is too good to punish us." One day they are going to have a rude awakening.

The Bible, God's inerrant Word, tell us that there is both a heaven and a hell. If we receive one and reject the other, we are reflecting upon the truth of God's Word. But we are not left to depend upon the opinions and speculations of men. We must rest upon the infallible truth of the infallible Bible.

You may deny the fact of hell, but that does not change the fact that it exists. Fire burns, whether you choose to believe that it does or not...poison kills, whether you believe it will or not. The world is round, whether you believe it or not....and hell is a reality whether you believe it or not. And if you reject the offer Christ is making today, you will go to hell, whether you believe you will or not.

Now listen to Jesus. He knew the truth about hell. He said that a certain rich man

died and went down to hell, and was in torment. He said that the man cried out, "I am tormented in these flames." He said that the man was anxious for his brothers to repent, so that they would not come to that "place of torment."

If a man breaks the laws of the land, what else is there to do but punish him? He is put in prison or sentenced to death. And if men rebel and sin against God and trample his son under foot, what else is God to do but put them in the prison called Hell? Man must exact his penalty for a broken law and so must God.

Suppose that a train carrying 500 passengers was coming down the track and that you and I were 20 miles ahead of the train. And suppose that we found that a trestle over a mighty river had fallen in. As I think of the train approaching, I say, "I must warn them and save their lives." But you say, "I wouldn't do that, it might scare the passengers. Some of them would faint. Be nice to them and don't disturb them." And the train rushes on to tragedy and the passengers are killed.

Have I done the right thing? Have I been prompted by love? No. If I loved people, I would warn them. And if I love lost souls, I must hold up my Bible and say, "This is God's Word. It tells us that there is a hell for those who reject Christ. Come to him and be saved from such an awful fate."

So I say to you, not out of my own wisdom but on the strength of God's Word, that there is a hell as surely as there is a heaven. And men who reject Christ go to hell as surely as those who accept him go to heaven.

## The Bible's description of hell

Look for a minute at the biblical expression which describe hell. It is called a Lake of Fire - a bottomless pit - a horrible tempest - a devouring fire - a place of sorrows - a place of weeping and wailing - a place of torments - everlasting destruction - a place of outer darkness - a place where men have no rest - a place where men are tormented with fire and brimstone - a place where the fire is not quenched.

1. *It is a place of separation from God.* We couldn't exist here a second if we were cut off from God. But think of being in hell, cut off from Him forever. We can pray here; we can call on His name. But prayers will not help in hell, for men will be forever separated from God.

2. *It is a place of unsatisfied desires.* When we have desires here, we can usually satisfy them in some measure. If a man desires money, there are many ways to get it. If he wants liquor, he can get it. If he wants to satisfy his fleshly nature, he can do it. But in hell, he will be burning up with these desires, and there will be no way to satisfy them. The rich man in hell wanted water, but there was no way to get it. So man, with all of this cravings, will suffer in hell with unsatisfied desires.

3. *It is a place of vilest companionship.* The worst people, the meanest, cruelest,

filthiest people will be there. Let me tell you something that will add to the horrors of hell for some people. They live clean lives, they are cultured and refined, they are good citizens, they are nice to their family and friends. But they reject Jesus Christ. One day they will be cast into hell, to live the rest of eternity with liars, adulterers, murderers, drunkards, homosexuals, and the vilest of creatures. This will be an awful thing for them and will last forever. They can never die and leave these people, and they can't get up and move away.

4. *It is a place of hopelessness.* Hope is the mainspring that keeps us going down here. When we are sick, we hope to get well. When we are poor, we hope things will get better. When we are unhappy, we hope soon to find happiness. When we have an unpleasant job, we hope to get a better one. But there is no hope in hell. There you just suffer and live in hopeless despair. Over the doors of an ancient prison were these words: "Abandon hope all ye that enter herein." That is nothing compared to hell. There is not one second of hope there. When you are cast into hell, it is forever.

5. *It is a place of suffering.* I don't think I need to dwell on that. Every Bible description of hell denotes suffering - intense, everlasting suffering. I know a woman who is now suffering greatly. She knows she is going to die soon, so she says, "It will soon be over." No one can ever say that in hell. There suffering there never ends.

6. *It is a place of memory.* When men are haunted by a bitter memory here, they can commit suicide. But you can't do that in hell; you must live on; you must remember. Your memory will be like 10,000 mirrors around you, recalling all the sins and follies of your life. You will remember how you sold your eternal soul for the pleasures of this world. You will remember every sermon and every song you ever heard, every invitation to salvation, every wooing of the Holy Spirit. You will remember how your mother prayed for you and your friends and family sought to win you to Christ. You will remember how you held back from any decision for Christ. As you remember all these things, this memory will be hell in itself. Oh, to be shut up in hell with memory always fresh.

You will remember that instead of suffering in hell, you could have been enjoying the happiness and bliss of heaven. You will remember the easy terms upon which you could have been saved. If it had been impossible for you to repent and trust Christ, this would have made the agony easier. But you will remember that you could have had eternal life for the asking, and you turned it down. You will remember how cheaply you sold out to Satan, and how you exchanged the joys of heaven for the sorrows of hell.

On this earth you sometimes blame Christians for your own sins. You say that they are a bunch of hypocrites. Then you turn your back on God and continue in your sin. You blame everybody else for your unsaved condition while you're here, but in hell you'll remember that you're the guilty one. Remember now that the issue is between you and God and no one else. You must account to Him for yourself and not for the hypocrites. It will be no one's fault but your own if you deliberately seal your own doom.

It isn't easy to go to hell. Before you get there you must climb over the church, the Bible, gospel sermons, your conscience, your better judgment, the Holy Spirit, and all the providences of God. Then finally you must climb over Calvary and trample Jesus Christ under foot. In hell, you'll remember that you did all of this.

## **When does hell begin?**

It begins at the end of a Christless life. If you go through life without Christ, your soul enters into conscious suffering when you die. I am not saying that you enter into the full measure of suffering at that time. This must wait until all the records are in. Then at the Great White Throne judgment, all the sinner's works will be judged, and the degree of punishment will be determined. Oh, man without Christ, you don't know how close you are to hell. It may be that before midnight your heart will stop beating and you'll go out to begin an eternity of suffering and anguish.

What do you have to look forward to if Christ is not your Saviour? At best, you have only a few more years in this world with its pleasures, its troubles and sorrows. Then comes a death without hope and nothing beyond but everlasting doom. How different is the outlook of a Christian! Just a little while longer here, then the door opens and he enters into the joy of his Lord and a glorious heaven. Oh, friend, what folly to go on without Christ and miss heaven.

## **How can we escape hell?**

You can never escape it through the good works of the flesh. You may do many things to gain the favor of God. You may join a church, be baptized, give your money, help people, live a good life. But these things will not save you. Salvation is an inner thing, a thing of the heart. The Bible plainly tells us that if we believe on Jesus Christ, the doors of hell will be forever closed to us.

You were condemned to die. But God's son could not be satisfied to see you die and go down to hell. He said, "Father, I'll pay the price for him. I'll suffer the pangs of death in his place. I'll satisfy the demands of the law on him." So he went to the cross and paid in full the measure for all of our sins. Now if we accept that payment, our sins are forgiven, we are saved, we become the children of God and heirs of heaven.

Your sins may have been as black as the pit, or you may have lived a good moral life. It doesn't matter - there is mercy for you with the Lord. He was bruised for your iniquities and wounded for your transgressions. He stands today with open arms saying, "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

END

A Trip to Hell

Ye Must Be Born Again!